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## Conditional Formatting in Excel

April 8, 2003

By Neil J. Rubenking

**I use Microsoft Excel 2000, and I want to format a row based on the value of one of the cells in that row. When I looked at the Conditional Formatting menu, it seemed that I could change that cell but not the whole row. How can I change the row?**

**Jon Finbraaten**

Two other readers have written in with similar questions. One wanted to maintain a consistent highlight in alternate rows and another wanted to add a border beneath every fifth row. Conditional formatting is the answer to all these questions.

To highlight alternating rows, first select the area to be formatted or press Ctrl-A to select the entire sheet. Choose Conditional Formatting from the Format menu. In the pull-down menu on the left-hand side, select Formula Is and enter this formula:

`=Row()=Odd(Row())`

Click on the Format button, then select the Patterns tab and assign a background color. This procedure will format all odd-numbered rows with the background color.

Creating a border under every fifth row is handled in much the same way. The formula in this case is

`=MOD(ROW(),5)=0`

Instead of setting a background color, click on the Format button, then select the Border tab and choose a border for the cell bottom. In both cases, the formatting is associated with the row position, not the cell contents. The formatting remains consistent even when you insert or delete rows.

To answer your question specifically, here's how to format all cells in a row based on the contents of one cell in that row. Suppose you want special formatting to apply anytime the cell in column A has the value 1. Select cell A1 and open the Conditional Formatting dialog as before. Enter the formula `=A1=1`, define your special formatting, and click on OK. Choose the Format Painter button in the standard toolbar and select the entire area that you want to format.

Because you used the absolute column address \$A, the copied formula always refers to column A. And because you used a relative row address without the \$ prefix, it always refers to the current row.

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